

Keepers Mid Season Report 2009

Compared to last Season it was a very slow start with the water levels low and very clear, coupled with several weeks of clear blue skies and north-easterly winds which were not favourable for hatches. With few fish rising it was very challenging until the weather changed towards the end of April. From then on with warmer, wetter conditions there have been some very good hatches of olives, with good numbers of mediums, iron blues and olive uprights with a mixture of sedges and stonefly also coming off. There are still large numbers of yellow sally stonefly hatching as I write.

Following on from last winter's tree work, we have been planting ranunculus weed above Harrys, Morley and at the top of Freddie's. All of this appears to have taken well, adding extra habitat for both invertebrates and fish.

As I predicted the Mayfly hatch was not as good as in the previous 2 or 3 years. I would say that there was less hatching overall but with good numbers coming off over a shorter period at the Bobbin Mill and Lock Bridge areas. Dave managed to collect all the eggs he needed to carry on the seeding project upstream, which is still paying dividends.

On the Himalayan Balsam front there are far fewer plants on the tip at Buxton and in the headwaters of the Wye than we anticipated and I am hopeful that we will eradicate it from the river system in the next four years, although I expect we will probably have to mop up a few plants on the tip for several more years to come.

Three - minute kick samples

Duffer's 12/5	Lock Bridge 13/5	
Heptagenids 175	Heptagenids 740	
Stonefly 45	Stonefly 110	
Baetis 1130	Baetis 1150	
Cased Caddis 180	Cased Caddis 53	
Caseless Caddis 35	Caseless Caddis 100	
Mayfly 4	Mayfly 14	
Shrimp 230	Shrimp 125	
BWO 21	BWO 40	
Day Ticket 12/6	Lock Bridge 19/6	Duffer's 19/6
Heptagenids 1160	Heptagenids 660	Heptagenids 200
Stonefly 230	Stonefly 50	Stonefly 160
Baetis 1130	Baetis 1600	Baetis 1100
Cased Caddis 155	Cased Caddis 300	Cased Caddis 195
Caseless Caddis 140	Caseless Caddis 110	Caseless Caddis 25
Mayfly 1	Mayfly 47	Mayfly 1
Shrimp 440	Shrimp 850	Shrimp 270
BWO 530	BWO 900	BWO 280

Some very impressive counts - note the upwing scores (Hep,Baetis, BWO), showing how rich in aquatic invertebrates the River Wye is. The score of 47 Mayfly at Lock bridge on the 19/6 was made up of 45 first year and 2 second year nymphs.

On the poaching front a case against a well known gypsy family member and 'friend' from last year was successfully prosecuted with a total of £400 fine and £120 costs. This season so far we have caught 21 poachers, mostly gypsies. Our thanks go to a couple of members together with Tom Richardson and Malcolm Harding for being vigilant and informing us at the time of the incident. This resulted in the majority of the offenders being apprehended. I am still in discussions with the EA solicitors and the Crown Prosecution Service about a serious case involving a 14yr old using a daisy chain made of grass with a piece of bread (an illegal instrument) who we caught after information received !! Talking about poachers we have now got an Alsatian, which at present is being trained and will soon be seen walking the banks.

As many of you will know we have now completed the second Rivercraft Course, the first attended by 9 members and the second by 8. The courses covered entomology, tackle set-up and casting which took place in the morning followed by an afternoon with members receiving instruction from Don Stazicker, Stuart Crofts and Steve Yeoman.

On behalf of myself and the Club I would like to thank them for their time and the excellent instruction on both days. I have received many positive comments from the rods participating, ranging from lesser experienced rods to very skilled anglers within the club, who told me that they all enjoyed and benefited from the day. I hope to arrange a further two courses next season and should be able to let you know dates by the March meeting.

The Environment Agency has just recently carried out its annual electro fishing survey, just above Duffer's. The resulting catch was of some 70 fish, mostly browns between 2 inches and 22 inches, with the majority wild fish in the ¾ lb range. This shows good continuing recruitment of wild fish.

Bringing us up to date with this period of hot weather, the fishing has been at its best in the evening with good falls of sherry spinner, red spinner(olive uprights) and good numbers of sedge starting to appear. The daytime fishing has been more challenging with hatches of small sedge, bwo's, and small dark olives. This means members having to search out faster water or shaded areas, using smaller flies with finer tippets. Patterns such as small cdc's, klinkhamers, double badger, small sedge patterns and lightly dressed nymphs are catching well at present.

Tight lines.

Stephen.